**Lecture One : Introduction to Text Study**

**1. What is a Text**

The word text includes both oral and written forms of language although they do not always share the same characteristics. Brown and Yule (1983: 4-16) discuss the problematic issues of spoken and written texts, their similarities and differences in context, manner and form, and adopt **Text** as a technical term, to refer to the **verbal record** of a **communicative act**.” (Brown and Yule, 1983: 6)

Communicative means that the text must convey a complete message.

The expression **verbal record** refers to **transcripts** –of oral language- which are supposed to transcribe the maximum features of speech into writing.

It is often a **language unit** which has a communicative function, such as a conversation (Crystal, 1992: 72)

If a text has a communicative function, thus it is considered as a **discourse**.

it is deducible that a text is the manifestation of written or spoken utterances characterized with specific characteristics that form one understandable unit designated for communication, analysis and interpretation.

2. Oral and Written texts

**a-Oral Text:**

Oral text is a communication or transfer of information using words that are spoken, such as in a lecture or a presentation.

Oral text lends itself to the use of speech acts which are functions of communication that might include congratulating, ordering, demanding, promising, hinting, warning, or greeting.

Oral texts also contain discourse markers which are words that create pause or separation of ideas such as: well, so , or anyway..

**-Some positive characteristics of oral text**

• Meaning is supported by nonverbal communication and other factors such as tone and intonation.

• It can be done spur of the moment

• The audience is known to the one delivering the message

• The pace of communication is generally determined by the speaker

**b-Written Text:**

Written text is also the transfer of information, but as it name suggests it involves the written word. To be successful, the writer and the receiver must have the necessary skills for delivery of information; **the writer must be able to write and the reader must be able to read.**

Written text is often tied with the type and/or structure of language used to imply purpose and context within a specific subject matter especially when looking at literature.

**3. Key Criteria for Textuality:**

Criteria for textuality refers to the **characteristics that defines a text**. Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) presented seven standards of textuality to be considered:

1. **Cohesion** Cohesion is primarily concerned with the relationships that link the language elements together to make a text. Itis the way in which linguistic items of which texts are constituted and meaningfully interconnected in sequences. Cohesion may be of four types: reference, ellipse, conjunction and lexical cohesion.

« A text has **texture** and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text (…). The texture is provided by the cohesive “relation” (…). Cohesive relationships within a text are set up where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other in the sense that it can not be effectively decoded except by recourse to it‟ (Halliday and Hassan, 1970: 2-4)

**Texture, then, is the linking, binding, of text together so that interrelationships of meaning interpretation can be drawn from the text itself. It is important to distinguish cohessive texts from random sentences or utterances .**

• **Reference** as cohesive device has to do with the introduction of a new item in the text and the subsequent referral to that same item by means of another item, usually a shorter form (popularly referred to as a ‘pro-form’). *Pronouns*, *demonstratives*, *comparatives*, a variety of lexical constructions, even *adverbs* and *adjectives* are used for this function. The effect of reference lies in the retrieval of information (referential meaning) from somewhere else in the sentence or in a neighboring sentence by using one of the grammatical devices mentioned above. “*Cohesion itself lies in the continuity of reference whereby the same thing enters into the discourse a second (and more) time(s)*” (Halliday & Hasan 1976, p.31).

**Substitution**

It is when we substitute in other words replace an earlier word or words with another word or words. E.g. The graph on the left shows average calorie intake by age, while the one on the right shows daily exercise levels. The word “one” is a substitution because it is a substitute of the word “graph”

• **Ellipsis** means elements in sentences are physically deleted/omitted because the writer believes that the reader will insert the missing elements on his or her own as the sentence is used. In this case the pressure is on the reader or listener to make the cohesive link (e.g., Have some more).

Here are fifty cards.

Take any (-).

Some say one thing, others say another (-)

Which coat will you wear?

This is the best (-)

Followings are the illustrative examples that show the grammatical cohesive tie in italics in each:

(i) Wow, how beautiful flower vessel! How much does it cost? [reference]

(ii) (ii) You are going to attend the party? If so, what about these agenda? [substitution]

(iii) (iii) We can buy those apples if we need to (buy those apples). [ellipsis]

(iv) (iv) He passed the exam. However, he did not obtain A plus. [conjunction]

• **Conjunction**, mainly conjunctions and adverbs are used to connect propositions in neighboring sentences according to certain semantic relations (e.g. additive, adversative, causal and temporal) between the propositions. The conjunctive elements serve to “*... reinforce*

*and highlight the relationship between other elements of the tex*t” (Donnelly 1994:105). The specific choice of the conjunctive marker provides the reader with clues as to how the writer perceives the statement to be related.

• **lexical cohesion** refers to semantic relations (such as synonymy, antonymy, collocation) created by specific lexical items. Knowledge of semantic structures is necessary in order to understand this type of cohesion.

**2. Coherence:** “*A coherent text has an underlying logical structure that acts to guide the reader through the text*” so that “*it ‘sticks together’ as a unit*” (Hatch 1992:209) and creates the “*feeling that a text hangs together, that it makes sense, and is not just a jumble of sentences*” (McCarthy 1991, p. 26).

a written text needs to be coherent to be understood by a reader. Hyland (2006) defined coherence as: “The ways a text makes sense to readers through the relevance and accessibility of its configuration of concepts, ideas and theories” (p. 311) From this point of view, coherence involves logical connections at idea level (topic). Thus, so as to facilitate the reader‟s comprehension, all the sentences that make up each paragraph have to be logically arranged by following a continuous order based on the message they are trying to convey (Hinkel, 2004). Within this framework, coherence is important in writing as it relates to expressing consistent and understandable ideas in a text.

The examples below show the coherent, and non-coherent texts:

(i) A text with coherence: A: Did you bring the car?

B: Yes, I brought it yesterday.

(ii) A text with no coherence: A: Where did you go last week?

B: That sounds good. My brother paints it.

When we talk about coherence, we‟re talking about how clear and how logical the ideas are.

Coherence relates to the macro level features of a text which help it to make sense as a whole.

\*You can have cohesion without coherence but you cannot have coherence without cohesion.

“I bought some hummus to eat with celery. Green vegetables can boost your metabolism. The Australian Greens is a political party. I couldn‟t decide what to wear to the new year‟s party.”

\* Some researchers such as Morgan and Sellner (1980), Carrell (1982) claim that cohesion is not sufficient enough to make a text connected or appear a unified whole. It is because a highly cohesive text with lots of connections and ties may cause difficulty in the interpretation of the message as Yule (2008, p 126) presents the following example:

My father bought a Lincoln convertible. The car driven by the police was red. That color does not suit her. She consists of three letters.

\* Coherence, on the other hand, has important role for creating unity between or among the propositional units in the text. Without coherence, a set of utterances cannot form a text, no matter, how many cohesive ties appear between the utterances. To show a text with no

cohesive ties, but perfectly coherent, Widdowson (1978) presents following example (as cited in Yule 2008, p 127):

A: That‟s the telephone.

B: I‟m in bath.

Cohesion and coherence are two different things.A text is cohesive if its elements are linked

together. A text is coherent if it makes sense. However, a text may be cohesive (i.e. linked together), but incoherent (i.e. meaningless).Cohesion refers to connectivity in a text, but coherence refers to how easy it is to understand the writing. While coherence means the connection of ideas at the idea level, cohesion means the connection of ideas at the sentence level. Text may be cohesive without necessarily being coherent: Cohesion does not spawn coherence. Cohesion is determined by lexically and grammatically overt intersentential relationships, whereas coherence is based on semantic relationship